

INTERFACE

Newsletter of the Mi Computer Club



May, 1983

The Bulletin Board dominates again...mainly because there's been so much interest from members (and also because we want to explain the logon process again - it had changed even before the last issue of Interface reached some members with the details!).

The board has already logged more than 420 successful calls - and there have been quite a few failures as well! Of the successful ones, around 15 percent have been from visitors; club members who are not board members.

Most of the unsuccessful ones have been people who have failed to read the instructions - both here, and in the 'newcomers' message on the board - on how to enter their "ID-CODE".

Board Membership

One thing that has puzzled many newer members (those who weren't in the club when the previous board was on-line) is the difference between club membership and board membership.

To become a fully-fledged bulletin board member, you have to pay a joining fee which is completely separate to your normal club membership. This fee is a once-only charge, to cover administration costs and documentation (when we finally get it out!); once this is paid, there are no further connect-time or annual charges. Your board membership remains valid for as long as you maintain your paid-up club-member status. The fee is \$20 at the moment, although you can expect that to rise in July.

Non-board-members are allowed visitor access to the board: this allows them to log on up to 10 times for a look around. They can look at everything (except the private mail section - because mail can't be sent to non-board-members anyway), but they cannot place notices, advertisements or meeting notices.

The Advantages

The obvious advantages of bulletin board membership are that you can send and receive private mail, place public notices, advertise club meetings or items and services you wish to sell. You can also seek help from other members in solving your problems, which should provide a much more immediate solution than writing off to the club to have your plea for help included in Interface...

Other benefits to come in the near future include instant product-ordering - we're currently working on an ordering system which will have your request printed out ready for action the next working day - plus the ability to download many of the "Pocket Programs" from **Your Computer** magazine. That should save a lot of typing!

ENQUIRIES:

Phone: (02) 662-8888, ask for
Mi Computer Club

Bulletin Board: (02) 662-1686
(24 Hours)

Mail: P.O. Box 21, Waterloo
N.S.W. 2017

Norma Jackson: Club correspondence
Order and subscription queries.

Contributors can also use the board to download stories, ensuring safe and speedy delivery of their epics. And if we have your copy on disk, it has a much better chance of appearing, quickly, because there's less work for us to do to get it to print...

Long-Distance Callers

Don't think you have to live in Sydney to use the Board - we've had regular logons from Perth, Adelaide and Darwin, and one caller, according to his sign-on, rang in from New Guinea!

While you mightn't want to spend all night reading public notices at STD rates, a quick logon could be quite useful when you need help, or want to order some products.

The Current Log-On Procedure

The phone number for the Bulletin Board should appear in the box on the cover of Interface each month from now on. It's (02) 662-1686.

The first thing you'll see when you ring in is the question "HOW MANY NULLS (0-9) DO YOU NEED?". This is to set the number of null characters output by the Board after every carriage return. For normal terminals you would answer 0, but if you find your screen is a little slow and you are losing characters at the start of each line, experiment with the number of nulls until it is working correctly. (As an example, an Apple needs no nulls using its standard 40-column screen, but if you are using an 80-column card you will often need 3 nulls).

The next question is "CAN YOUR TERMINAL DISPLAY LOWER CASE?". If you answer 'N' to this one, the board's communications supervisor will fold all lower-case output (in messages etc.) to upper case before sending it to you.

The third question asks "DO YOU WANT TO FLIP THE MODEM MODE?" - if you are having reliability problems with your modem or the phone line, this gives you the chance to switch from Originate to Answer mode, which sometimes helps.

After these three questions, you are asked your first and last names for our user logs. This is then checked against the USERS' file and, if your name isn't already there you are put through the first-time login process which includes a special bulletin for newcomers and a system-user survey. You will only ever see this the first time you call, unless you forget how to spell your name...the moral is, if you want to avoid this time-consuming process, don't start signing in as FREDERICK when you used FRED last time, and so on.

Once you have been logged to disk (and put through the newcomer process if it's your first logon) you are passed to the Bulletin Board. If you get dumped to CP/M command level - which seems to be happening a lot these days (we'll fix that bug soon! In fact, as soon as we start putting the pocket programs up you'll go direct to CP/M before the Board anyway) - you simply type BOARD to get to the message system. In the meantime, you're welcome to look around by typing DIR or HELP; it's just that there's not much to see at the CP/M level at the moment.

Then comes the ID-CODE, which seems to be causing some people problems. We repeat: it is your member number, followed by a dash, followed by your password. The default password is the first six characters of your surname as it appears on your mailing label.

Therefore, for club member Paul Johnson, member number 1234, the ID-CODE would be: 1234-JOHNJO

No spaces, capital letters, and the dash is a must! If you change your password (which we highly recommend; just type PASSWORD at the Bulletin Board command level) the member number and the dash remain - only the six-letter password can be altered, to any alphanumeric string up to six characters.

Once you have changed to the new password, you must match it exactly, including upper and/or lower case. It's surprising how many members have complained to us they can't log on because the computer won't accept a valid ID-CODE - when we check our printer log, we invariably find they have ignored all the warnings and used lower case...

More Product Super-Specials

Watch out for price rises! Yes, that's what's happening all over the place at the moment - our suppliers have, in most cases, raised their price to us two or three times since we released our last catalogue. We're hoping to produce a new catalogue for next month, and until then we'll hold current prices wherever possible. However, we may have to up the prices on some orders - if that's the case, you'll be advised.

Just to soften the blow a little, here are some discounts on our general product lines - towels, T-shirts and diskettes. Firstly, seeing as how it's no longer summer, you can have a beautiful, big, blue MiCC beach towel (complete with computer logo) for a discount of around 30 percent - \$9.90 instead of \$14!

Same goes for the T-Shirts: you can have the standard shirt (white, with blue MiCC logo) for a mere \$4.50, or the Adventurer shirt (with Brendan Akhurst Adventure cartoon) for just \$4.90. Stock up for summer - you'll be hard-pressed to find T-Shirts of this quality at such giveaway prices. Don't forget to quote your size.

And now, for the one you've all been waiting for - a sell-out on **Nashua Diskettes**. We're offering a 10 percent discount on the old catalogue price on our current stock (several hundred diskettes). And, if you buy three or more boxes at a time, you can make that 15 percent!

Giant Saving For Apple Owners!

We've made a super-scoop purchase of two excellent locally produced software packages for the Apple, and we're passing the saving - up to 60 percent! - on to you.

The first is **Grafpak 1.0**, a superb tool which provides several extensions to Applesoft BASIC. It retails for just under \$100; we're offering it for a staggering \$39!

The second is **Phil's Cheap Editor**, a text processor that's perfect for people who don't need a full-scale word-processor. It retails for around \$50 - we're selling it for \$29...

Now, if that's not special enough for you, wait for this: If you buy both, you can have them for \$55 all-up - just over half the price of Grafpak alone. It's a giveaway - so get your order in now!

Computer Dust Covers Offer

COVERCARE of Chatswood has offered club members custom made computer dust covers at a discount price.

The covers are made to measure from anti-static cotton-backed vinyl, which is hard wearing and affords total protection. The discount represents a 25% saving.

The discounted price including postage is \$15.00. Covers are available for the Apple II, Atari 400 and 800, Commodore VIC-20 and the TI-99/4.

Covers are available through your dealer, Computerwave or direct from Cover Care. All orders to include Cheque or Money Order.

For further information, or prices of any other systems, contact Covercare on (02) 498 5631, or at PO Box 719, Chatswood, 2067.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Delivery Address:

Postcode

Membership No.

Telephone



KEY NUMBER	ITEM	QTY.	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL

Final Total \$ _____

OR charge to my Bankcard



4	9	6
---	---	---

minimum \$15

Bankcard phone orders accepted (02) 662-8888